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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on September 7, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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[1A. "A Dead Horse in the Constitutional Race"](#)  
(Al-Ittihad, affiliated with PUK led by Jalal Talabani, published this page-five editorial by Faryad Rawanduzi)

"Sati' Al-Husari established the first nationalist and dictatorial educational system in Iraq. The Iraqi educational sector is still suffering from that policy which marginalized both the Kurds and Shiites. On the other hand, Clovis Maksoud (I mean the former Arab League Ambassador to the United Nations) contends that everyone who was exposed to Arab culture, thoughts, science, and literature is an Arab even if they didn't possess Arab nationality. Moreover, Michel Aflaq, [a Christian] the Ba'ath Party founder, wrote in his book, In the Memory of the Arab Prophet, "It is possible to use Islam and the Qu'ran, which were written in Arabic, in a style to blend all other nationalities in the Arab Homeland into the crucible of the Arab nation. Khair Allah Talfah, Saddam's father-in-law, said in a symposium entitled, 'I believe that the Qu'ran is Arabic' (held in Mosul in the seventies) that 'Everyone who reads the Qu'ran and prays in Arabic is an Arab whether or not he or she accepts it.' Nowadays, it seems that the Sunni negotiators want to repeat the above-mentioned policies which attempt to marginalize the Kurds and Shiites in Iraq under the pretexts of an Arab identity. Furthermore, it looks like Amr Musa, who was taught in the schools of Aflaq and Al-Husari, thinks that the Arab League is the only authority that can define Iraq's national identity. He keeps forgetting that the Iraqi people are the only authority that can decide their future. We understand that to reach an agreement with the Sunnis, over the constitution, it was necessary to make the political process succeed. However, it was a big mistake and dangerous to accept their ideologies because Iraq's constitution and regime must not be based on the same former philosophies and policies that destroyed the country. The Americans made a big mistake when they supported one group of Sunni Arabs and ignored other groups who do not belong to or have the same ideology of Aflaq and Amr Musa. The current Sunni negotiators in the constitutional process seized the opportunity through their unanticipated participation in the constitutional and political process. They seized this chance to ride a dead horse. They hope to win control of Iraq again and marginalize the Kurds and Shiites who have been oppressed since 1921."

[1B. "The Second Copy and the Political Front"](#)  
(Zainab Al-Khafaji opined in Al-Bayyan, affiliated with the Islamic Ad-Da'wa Party led by Al-Ja'afari, this page-four editorial about the constitution)

"I think that the current discussions between the political blocs of the National Assembly and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad concerning the second version of the draft constitution that will be put to vote by the Iraqi people represent a good chance for these parties to review their attitudes. This step is very important because there are some groups threatening to boycott the referendum and I think that such a boycott will not serve the current discussions. These groups that want to reject the constitution are trying to foment popular discontent toward the constitution without having any justifiable reasons. It seems that these groups want to encourage dissent amongst the various political parties. It is weird that these groups make use of every talk or discussion to hinder the whole

constitutional and political process. The second version of the draft constitution, which is currently being amended by political parties, does not necessitate the alteration of the constitution's primary articles. All political blocs have agreed to the main articles therefore they needn't be amended. The current constitutional process requires fruitful political dialogue rather than futile dialogue."

**1C. "That Is Enough.Arabs"**

(Bassem Al-Sheikh wrote this front-page editorial in Ad-Dustoor, no bias, independent)

"Iraqis' patience towards their Arab brothers has reached its limit. President Talabani's appeal to the Arabs to restore diplomatic representation was filled with pain and bitterness, and when time elapsed without any action this pain transformed into an insult toward Iraqis. This account of Iraqi/pan-Arab relations has surfaced because of the Arabs' lack of concern for Iraq. The Arabs have failed to understand that the changes in Iraq are due to logical reasons, even if change was accompanied by occupation. Arab regimes have taken tentative stances toward Iraq, in way that demonstrates the belief that any relations with Iraq would be equated with support for the occupation and coalition forces. Iraqis regard Arab neglect (both official and on the part of the people) and dismissal of their plight as something that only increases their suffering at a time when Iraqis are already suffering horribly. The initial optimism of the Iraqi leadership towards the Arab world has been deflated-Iraqis waited and hoped for actions and results from an Arab summit or a regional conference but instead wasted a lot time for nothing more than promises. The bigger problem is that Iraq's leadership hasn't yet learned its lesson; they are still waiting for the Arabs and haven't learned from the past that Arab summits have never resolved any Arab problems.. The tone of President Talabani's statement, which elicited a lot of Arab (and international) reactions, addressed two messages: the first was that Arabs are uncooperative and their pushy stance toward Iraq was against its will; and second, Iraqis have lost hope and faith in the Arabs who have only added to Iraq's burden rather than sharing it and helping to end our suffering. The President's statement won't affect the Arabs, who share secret channels among themselves, because they may have different skins but they have the same metal."

**1D. "The Sheep and the Confession"**

(Az-Zaman, independent, recently anti-coalition and printed in London and Baghdad, published this back-page editorial by Fateh Abdul-Salam)

"The Iraqi government is furious with Arab countries that haven't sent ambassadors or high-level high level diplomatic representation to Iraq. This is how Arab countries officially acknowledge the legitimacy of the Iraqi government. No Arab leaders or even their ministers have visited Baghdad--not even as a courtesy. At this point all countries are equal, those who were against the war in Iraq and those who supported it, such as Kuwait. and they are still insisting that Baghdad is not secure enough to receive the Kuwaiti ambassador but they thought differently when they hosted American troops and opened their roads to American tanks allowing them to crush Iraqis bodies and invade our country destroying the infrastructure and opening our doors to terrorism; they did not take those consequences into consideration. Now the Americans are suffering from Iraq's latest political burden and the decision on the draft constitution that might lead to further instability in Iraq. We do not want to open closed doors with Kuwait and condone their shameful attitude towards Iraq and all Iraqis. They promised to send their ambassador and their ministers but they did not fulfill their promises, they supported the Americans against Iraq to exact their private revenge; they were planning to topple Saddam and his regime and it's clear they do not care about Iraqis. Other Arabs are no better than Kuwaitis, but the Kuwaiti's political hypocrisy is very clear. Geographically they are near and politically they are distant-they have worked against Iraq. All Arabs should be standing by Iraq's side backing the government instead of boycotting it. The simple fact about the Arabs is that they don't recognize the legitimacy of the new Iraqi government or of Iraq's new era. They are not ready to suffer the way Iraqis are now suffering. The Americans, amid their natural and political disasters, should remember to prod Arab countries to send their ambassadors to Baghdad. This way they will redeem their honor."

SATTERFIELD